

Jai Jinendra,

The Worshipful Mayor of Harrow, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to announce that the Winner of the **OneJAIN Community Excellence Award 2024 is: Mrs. Sonal Mehta**

For more than 32 years, Sonalben has dedicated herself to serving the Manchester community, with the past 12 years committed to full-time service.

She is a Trustee of Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur UK and head of the Manchester Centre.

Under her leadership, she has delivered numerous projects, covering Mental health, the environment, education, and care for the vulnerable and elderly.

Notably over the past three years she has been orchestrating the “Spreading Smiles” project with a team of 90 volunteers, which provides 250 hot meals and food packs each week to the homeless and vulnerable, **supporting** over 90,000 local residents.

Sonalben collaborates with several local community organisations such as Jain Samaj Manchester, the Jain Ashram in Birmingham, the Ram Mandir in Ashton, the Hindu Mandir in Sheffield, and various schools in Manchester. Her work focuses on promoting awareness of the Jain faith across all age groups through a programme centered on values-based education.

As a Trustee of the “Faith Network for Manchester”, she has helped to improve social cohesion, and community integration through a number of projects.

She initiated the first Interfaith walk at the iconic Albert Square, the installation of the Mahatma Gandhi Statue in Central Manchester, and the bi-annual Interfaith Service at Manchester Cathedral.

Her dedication and effectiveness in helping the vulnerable, bringing communities together, and promoting Jain values, demonstrates exceptional leadership, and the ability to take a broad and inclusive approach to community service.

We congratulate Sonal Mehta on winning the OneJAIN Community Excellence Award.